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EXALTATIONS AT THE APPROACH OF DEATH.

THE fear of death has unquestionably wrought in a great many minds those false repents which produce no radical change in the character. It has been said that religious experiences during severe sickness turn out to be spurious in case of recovery, and the man always relapses into his former life. If they are only induced by the fear of death, this is undoubtedly so. But that a death-bed repentance, *if it be repentance*, may be just as efficacious as any other, I see no reason to doubt. It is not always possible, however, and there is danger here of the greatest delusions, and need of the sharpest discriminations.

The following case is from real life : —

A man, who believed in the most rigid kind of theology, was taken dangerously sick. He was a country trader, member of a church, well known for his smoothness and keenness in making a bargain, and blinding the eyes of his customers when selling his goods. But he had not the remotest idea that the business of this world had anything to do with the concerns of another. Preparation for another world is obtained through some pious "exercise of the mind" in intervals of business or at the approach of death. A few godly

phrases were necessary, such as "trusting in Christ," "renouncing our own works," and the like; but this was about all. Such was the local belief, and such was the belief of our friend, the trader.

Physicians are generally thought to incline to scepticism, but I believe, when the matter is canvassed, it is generally found to be only a scepticism towards artificial theologies, that have no ground in the nature of things. They deal with facts, with terrible realities, with nature's laws, and are accustomed to look through deceitful subterfuges of all kinds. "Old Doctor C." was known as a skilful physician, blunt and downright, but not addicted to church-going. Mr. S., the sick trader, sent for him. The pulse was examined, the pills dealt out, and the directions given. But as the doctor was taking up his saddle-bags, Mr. S. turned to him with a very pious look.

"I have a solemn request to make of you, Dr. C."

"What! of *me*? a solemn request of *me*?"

"Yes, sir; it concerns my salvation, and I hope you won't refuse it."

"Why, bless you, Mr. S., that don't come in my line; send for the minister."

"But hear me. I feel that I am a very sick man, and if at any time you see I am going to die, I want you should let me know it at least *three days beforehand*."

"But what in the world do you want to know that for?"

"O, I don't know that I am prepared to die, and I shall want at least two or three days to prepare."

"O well, make your preparation, make your preparation, Mr. S.; and if you don't die, *it will not be lost—to your customers*."

Mr. S. did not die at that time, but his preparation, whatever it was, did his customers no good. The strange hallucination, that two or three days were enough to prepare for eternity, was a most legitimate inference from the doctrine of instantaneous regeneration. How these conceptions underlie a vast deal of the knavery and double-dealing there is in this

world, and inspire a great many death-bed scenes which are fondly reported afterwards, where there was no blunt Dr. C. to puncture the bubbles which sick men blow up for their own delusion, I have had occasion since to verify again and again.

Nevertheless, sickness has so important a part in our probation, its legitimate influence is so refining and sanctifying, that I am not at all disposed to reject death-bed repentances as universally and altogether spurious, nor to say, as some do, that the petition in the prayer-book, "From sudden death good Lord deliver us," has not some reason for it in the nature of things.

Why is it that there is almost always a period of sickness and decay which interspaces this world and the next, and which we must needs pass through? Because of its hallowing and renovating influence upon the mind and heart. The body, in its lustful strength, with all the senses open earthward, and taking in this world's delights, is sometimes a hindrance to clear perceptions of spiritual things. That gradual unclothing of the spirit, therefore, which we witness in chronic disease, sometimes aids vastly the spiritual intuitions, till the veil that hangs between earth and heaven has a semi-transparency, and the brooding glories of immortality bring down a solemn calm upon the mind and heart, and sometimes kindle its holiest aspirations. How many such instances as these do I remember, where the death-bed even of those who had been careless of Divine things, has seemed quite on the verge of heaven! There was a family of five,—the two parents with three grown-up daughters,—which was invaded by that spoiler incident to the New England climate, consumption. I can speak of them without impropriety, for they are all gone. The daughters were far from what we should call spiritually-minded. But it was delightful to see, as the body sat lighter and lighter upon the spirit, how the soul's vision became clearer, and communion with Christ became more full and fervent, and the anticipations of immortality more blissful.

The expectations of heaven illuminated the features, and seemed at times to annul the sufferings of the body, and fling a halo around it. At first, I was disposed to distrust all such mental exercises, though surviving friends always dwell fondly upon them. I have learned better, I think ; for though I would not always predicate upon these alone any radical change of the character, yet unless the previous life has been grossly corrupt, I would not call them mere physical manifestations. They may be, and in the cases referred to I think were, the gradual dawn of Divine grace in the soul, purging away the grossness of the flesh, that the mind might see more clearly and the heart feel more intensely the influences from above, and prepare them for the final transition from the natural world to the spiritual.

But sickness, though not mortal, has very often a renovating influence upon the character. Like sleep, it is in some sort the suspension of our voluntary powers. It is the Divine finger of Silence laid on all our activities and all our turbulence, that the Divine work within may go on without disturbance from ourselves. Who that has lived long cannot remember some hours or days when he was caught up by the Divine Providence and laid down in some silent chamber, where the world was shut out, and the tide of physical life ebbed feeble and low, when the body was purged of its grosser humors, the earth receded, and the inward ear caught more "authentic tidings of invisible things"? We have said and repeated so much, that "a sick-bed is a poor place to prepare for heaven," that we very likely forget how large is its agency in teaching us self-surrender, and that sense of absolute dependence which Schleiermacher makes the essence of all true religion. The prime cause of sickness is very often a super-abounding of the fleshly nature, and its waning and depletion in consequence may be, and often are, the removal of those clogs and fetters which hold the soul too strongly to earth and sense. A late chaplain in McClellan's army told us of his experience with wounded soldiers,— how with the loss of

blood the soul was sometimes lifted into wonderful clearness, even to previsions of an eternal world.

Hence that exaltation of the faculties which the death-touch often produces, wisely provided as a preparation for the last change, that the eternal world may come on in gradual dawnings, and not in a blaze of blinding and overwhelming light. There is a passage of Scripture which the commentators have handled, it seems to us, to very little purpose. "This day shalt thou be with me in Paradise," was the promise to the dying thief. The whole incident has a naturalness which avouches its reality. But we get a very inadequate notion of these men called "thieves," if we are thinking only of those who steal their neighbor's goods in peaceful and civilized communities. The word is rendered well enough, though it includes further the idea of robbery or violent seizure of the property of another. Who these men were, and to what class they belonged, there is not much doubt from the circumstances of the case. Josephus describes them. The Roman provinces of which Judæa was one were placed under proconsuls and governors, whose main object was to gather a revenue from the people from which to enrich themselves, and then return to Rome and live in luxury and splendor. These exactions were sometimes exceedingly oppressive,—were excitements to insurrections, concealments, and reprisals. Some of the more daring and reckless would band together among themselves and seek the fastnesses of the mountains. There they would conceal their goods, and thence issue by stealth and make reprisals on the power that oppressed them,—perhaps make assaults on the unwary traveller. They sought the wild coverts of Judæa, leading a life of irregular warfare, always objects of dread to the Roman governors, and subject, when arrested, to execution under Roman law. They answered in part to the clans of the Highlands, the Dreds of the Great Swamp, or the John Browns of our border warfare. They might include men of a vast range of character, from the very worst

to men of natural humanity, pursuing a good end by unlawful means, and roughened and made grim in the irregular strife.

Two of these men have been arrested, and are to be executed under Roman law. Amid the darkness and convulsion, Matthew describes the demeanor of *both* the robbers,—how, in the frenzy of pain, both joined with the Jewish scoffers, and taunted the Divine sufferer with the invitation to come down from the cross. But when we open Luke, and see the spectacle from his point of view, a new scene opens upon us, and one of so much moral beauty that it flings a gleam of sunshine across the horrors of Calvary. It is a scene of penitence, forgiveness, and triumph over death. One of the malefactors, Luke says, railed on him, but *the other* rebuked him, saying, “Dost thou not fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation; and we justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds, but this man hath done nothing amiss?”

On the surface there is an apparent discrepancy between Matthew and Luke. It is only apparent, and because the harmony is so profound and complete.

We loosely call these narratives parallel. They are not so. They are *introlatent*. One lies within another. Matthew describes the most external series of facts, scarcely ever getting within the physical phenomena,—telling them as they would have been seen by an outside looker-on. Luke takes us farther inward, and tells us sometimes what no distant looker-on could have seen or heard. John takes us farther inward still, to the very shrine of the Godhead. One is within the other, line within line, like circles convergent towards an illuminated centre, whose glories you approach, not by parallel passages, but in spiral lines, till the Saviour in his unclouded Divinity breaks upon the sight.

When the crucifixion *commenced*, the two robbers, thinking Christ was a malefactor, joined the Jewish rabble, and reviled him. Matthew tells us so much, and leaves us. But Luke takes us farther inward. The crucifixion proceeds

through the weary hours from morning till afternoon. The touch of the death-angel has come, which upon susceptible natures has sometimes such wondrous potency in classifying the higher perceptions, and in the exaltation of all the faculties. Within the sphere of grosser vision, within the tumult around and the anguish of mortality, one of the malefactors sees Christ as he is, himself as he is, hears him and understands him, and turns to him for salvation and pardon. How all-revealing is the hour ! Passed the sphere of carnal perception, passed the maddening paroxysms and the torture of the nails, passed the sound of passion and hate that were raging around the cross, into that still haven where all is calm and clear, under the nearing immortality and the subduing spirit of the Lord. In that undertone of indescribable tenderness, which few if any could have heard who stood amid the storm of rage and the wagging of heads, he says, "Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom." And Jesus replies, "To-day shalt thou be with me in Paradise."

This impressive narrative affords not the least ground for the belief that a prevailingly bad life can terminate in a happy and triumphant death. The doctrine of irresistible grace, of instantaneous regeneration without any agency of ours, gets no support here ; for why should one malefactor be taken and the other left ? The narrative does give us some prevision of the *inversions* of the spiritual world, where judgment is not according to appearances, but according to intrinsic realities. What a contrast have we here between this wild bandit from the mountains and the Jewish Sanhedrim, which condemned and crucified the Lord ! — they the most outwardly religious men, grace-hardened in long years of light and privilege ; he garbed in the grimness of strife, but preserving a more honest heart and more susceptibility to the Divine mercy ; — they the heirs of all God's revelations, whose light they never followed ; he the heir of small light and privilege, following very possibly righteous ends by unlawful means. We

get some idea of that state of being to which this tends, and in which it consummates, where splendid externals and grim and horrible coverings are both removed, and man's hidden and intrinsic life is brought out and robed anew. How much susceptibility to the Divine mercy is preserved under heathen darkness, to be awakened under the dawning light and grace of immortality, and how much of impenitence and inhumanity have been confirmed under church privilege, till the Divine grace rebounds from it as from an anvil !

But this repentance of the bandit on the cross ought to teach us to make the most of occasion, for this comes to every one. It is not sickness unto death that we should wait for, but all sickness should be regarded as God's time of visitation, when the noise of this world recedes, the obscurations of sense are less impervious, and our tent is pitched nearer the open gates through which the "Come up hither" of the glorified multitudes is more articulate and audible. All sickness should be looked upon as the touch of the death-angel, refining and subduing, though gentle, and from a great way off. If we seek to turn our opportunities to the best account, we shall regard its hours as sacredly set apart, that we might be drawn inward and upward to clearer visions of eternity. Its chambers will be holy places. And if permitted to leave them and go again into busy life, we shall not forget the good resolves we made there, when the sins of our past life "streamed o'er our memory like a forest flame"; we shall not forget the state of tender penitence into which we melted down before the Lord; of childlike dependence in the hollow of his hand; of sensibilities purged of their grossness, possibly refined to angelic affection. We shall seek these frames as the opportunities of the still chamber are given us. Sickness will not make us more selfish and exacting, but more humbled and purified. If we go again to our duties, we shall aim to carry these frames of mind into them. We shall be more spiritually minded, because the death-angel has touched us on the way. But if we go not again to our post of duty,

but are to pass on, especially if it is to be through chronic sickness and suffering, we shall regard our gradual unclothing of mortality as a means for the gradual putting on of our spiritual body from within, and the daily opening of our spiritual sight, so that heaven, when it comes, will not come strangely and suddenly, since we have already breathed its air, and looked through open windows into its transcendent glories.

S.

## THE ALMSHOUSE.

## I.

## AT THE COTTAGE.

*Grace (within).* Haste, aching fingers, on your weary task !  
 Let me not leave these straws unbraided till  
 The twilight doth come on ; for I would bring  
 Some fragrant tea for Felix : long it is  
 Since he hath tasted it. O fingers, haste !  
 Ye are not lithe as once ye were, — as once,  
 When o'er the ivory keys ye strayed to draw  
 Sweet music out ; or pencil guided on,  
 Till rocks and trees and flowers in mimic forms  
 Grew springing at your touch in magic haste !\*  
 Ye are not lithe as once ye were ; but now  
 I pray you serve me for a little while, —  
 A little longer, — till earth's waning light  
 Shall fall upon our graves !

O whence shall come  
 The fuel for our winter's fire ? Chill winds  
 Already do prevail. I have no fear  
 That God will e'er forsake us ; yet I see  
 No opening way, — no path that leads to hope  
 For life's late-coming years.

*Felix (without).*                    Must ? must ? ay, must !  
 O happy Felix, once ! When thou wast young,  
 No dreamer would have dared foretell, " Thou wilt  
 A refuge in the almhouse find, ere thou  
 Shalt be threescore ! "

O rich and wasted gifts,  
 That might have crowned my life with sweetest joys,  
 How were ye scorned and lavished upon naught !  
 Naught, worse than naught, as this bent frame,  
 These sightless eyeballs, and the snowy locks  
 That crown this weary head do testify !  
 O most unhappy Felix, to have wrought  
 Such woe, such ruin on thy hapless wife !  
 For thee, O wretched man ! no help, no hope !

## II.

## HOPE, FAITH, LOVE.

Fair as buds at opening morn,  
 Hope, fair sister, come !  
 Come to cheer a heart of grief,  
 Whose sad path no flowers adorn, —  
 Come to bring it quick relief, —  
 Hope, fair sister, come !

Bright as beams of sunlit day,  
 Faith, bright sister, come !  
 Waken blindness, deep in night,  
 With a soul-illumining ray,  
 Kindled from celestial light, —  
 Faith, bright sister, come !

Sweet as harp at twilight hour,  
 Love, sweet sister, come !  
 Pour in gentle Pity's ear  
 Strains of sympathetic power, —  
 Haste to soften Sorrow's tear, —  
 Love, sweet sister, come !

## III.

## AT THE ALMSHOUSE.

*Grace.* Away from yonder crowd, I led thee here,  
 Under the shelter of these drooping boughs,  
 That I might tell thee, Felix, of a dream  
 That yesternight I dreamed. Methinks it was  
 The fairest vision e'er these eyes beheld,  
 Waking or sleeping. Be not thus cast down,  
 Dear Felix, — listen to my dream !

## The clock

Had tolled the midnight hour of twelve. A form,  
Radiant with glistening wings, looked down on me,  
With eyes that smiled like violets. On a staff,  
The semblance of an anchor, trustingly  
She leaned. Softly she spoke : " Be not cast down,  
Be not disquieted ! " Upward I looked.  
Heaven's golden glory broke upon my sight,  
Too bright for mortal gaze to bear. There fell  
Upon my ravished ear celestial waves  
Of angel voices : " Blest are they that mourn ;  
Blest, for they shall be comforted." My soul,  
Enraptured with a sense of blessedness  
Undreamed of in this heavy-burdened life,  
Gave thanks to Him from whom the vision came.

*Felix.* Amazed I am at thy recital, Grace ;  
For as the clock the midnight hour of twelve  
Tolled on my wakeful ear, a still repose  
Came o'er me. And, O blessed taste of joy !  
These stone-blind eyes were opened. I beheld  
An angel kneeling by a cross. Her lips  
Were pressed upon it. With uplifted brow  
Of wondrous brightness, these blest words she spake :  
" Come unto me, all ye that labor and  
Are heavy laden ; I will give you rest ! "  
A blissful calm o'ertook me ; but a calm  
Such as was never mine in youth's gay time,  
Nor in the proudest prime of manhood.

Grace,

What meaneth this bright vision ? Thinkest thou  
It symbolizeth soone consoling truth  
To lighten these dark days, in mercy sent  
From Heaven ?

*Grace.* Ay, Felix, in my inmost heart  
I do believe it. Thine and mine were sent  
Visions from Him who numbereth every hair  
Upon our heads, for our heart-breaking griefs,  
That we no more may sorrow without hope.  
A stranger cometh, Felix, — yet a friend  
Surely ; how softly falls her step upon  
The rustling, gay-hued leaves, that gathered lie  
A beauteous carpet on the bare, chill ground,  
This autumn morning. Ay, she is a friend, —

I read it in her fair and gentle face,—  
 She is a friend. Stranger, come sit thee here  
 Upon this garden-seat. Its latticed roof  
 Of interlacing twigs will shield thee well  
 From the cold morning breeze.

*Mary.*   A friend I come ;  
 But though a friend unknown, a Friend  
 Thou knowest well hath sent me hither. Call  
 Me Mary. Shall I read you from this book ?  
 It is the “ Gleams of Immortality,” —  
 A precious volume for those earnest hearts  
 That love to ponder on eternal things.  
 But let me first relate to you a dream  
 That came to me.

At twilight I had mused  
 On those sublime and precious words of Christ,  
 “ Parable of the Judgment.” “ Inasmuch  
 As ye have done it unto one of these, —  
 The least of these, my brethren, — ye have done  
 It unto me.”

The midnight hour of twelve  
 Had tolled. An angel form appeared to me.  
 A golden harp she bore. Its silver strings  
 She lightly swept with strains of melody,  
 And thus with voice of heavenly sweetness sang : —

“ Child of earth, come learn of me ;  
 Learn with love supreme to love  
 Him who dwells in heaven above ;  
 Love all lives that in Him move !

“ Child of earth, come follow me ;  
 Come all captives to release ;  
 Fill all weary hearts with peace ;  
 Bid all human woes to cease !

“ Child of earth, come dwell with me,  
 Where are seen no tearful eyes, —  
 Where are heard no hopeless sighs, —  
 Where all pain, all sorrow dies !

“ Child of earth, abide with me :  
 Bliss of earth to give is mine ;  
 Bliss of heaven shall be thine, —  
 Love unspeakable, divine !”

WERE THE PURITAN FATHERS BIGOTS AND FANATICS?

II.

To the first current charge against our Puritan Fathers, that they were false to civil liberty, because "they tyrannously restricted the freedom of their body politic to members of their own communion," we have given two replies: first, they had no ideal of civil liberty that they had undertaken to actualize; and, second, what they *did* seek to accomplish compelled them, from the nature of the case, to limit the privileges of citizenship. There remain still other defences of their action.

One is distinctly set forth in the Act defining the limits of the suffrage. It was "ordered and agreed, that no man shall be admitted to the freedom of this body politic but such as are members of some of the churches within the limits of the same, to the end the body of the commons may be preserved of honest and good men."

Upon this Dr. Palfrey beautifully observes: "They determined that magistracy and citizenship should belong only to Christian men, ascertained to be such by the best test which they knew how to apply. They established a kind of aristocracy hitherto unknown. Not birth nor wealth nor learning nor skill in war was to confer political power; but personal character,—goodness of the highest type,—goodness of that purity and force which only the faith of Jesus Christ is competent to create."

"The conception, if delusive and impracticable, was a noble one. Nothing better can be imagined for the welfare of a country than that it should be ruled on Christian principles; in other words, that its rulers should be Christian men,—men of disinterestedness and integrity, of the choicest quality that the world knows,—men whose fear of God exalts them above every other fear, and whose controlling

love of God and of man consecrates them to the most generous aims."

Lastly, the fathers restricted the suffrage, for a reason more cogent and imperative than either of those yet cited, namely, SELF-PRESERVATION.

If they had constituted their state an open democracy, its beginning would have been its end. To appreciate this, let the reader take into view the condition of things in the mother country at the time they settled here. Charles the First was on the throne, whose darling project was the establishment of arbitrary power, and that chiefly as against the Puritans themselves. Laud was his prime spiritual adviser, and the head of his bloody High Commission,—Laud, fit instrument of tyranny. He hated the Puritans worse than he hated the Devil. Nay, he showed unmistakably that he was in league with the Devil against the Puritans. The colonists had left home because of the oppression that, thus fathered and fostered, had ground them into the dust. And they did not come alone. There was a background of romance and a margin for wild adventure to their enterprise that commended it to many a restless spirit. So a crowd of adventurers, busy with schemes of personal gain or ambition, and void of the slightest sympathy with the motives and characters of the Puritans, followed closely in their footsteps. And when they were ready to set up the framework of their political organism, this chance, nondescript crowd, more than a hundred in number, some of them bigoted adherents of the persecuting State Church at home, applied for admission to all the rights and privileges of membership in the company. What should they do with these,—admit them? Yes, if they were disposed deliberately to strangle their infant commonwealth in its cradle! It would have been to lay themselves open to the interference, the malice, the repressive influence of the English throne and hierarchy, from whose active cruelties they had just escaped. It would have been to exile themselves from the conduct

of affairs, and condemn themselves to present obscurity and final extinction. Self-preservation, therefore, demanded the exclusion of all these persons; demanded that the company should protect itself, for a time at least, from the intrusion of any who did not sympathize in its purposes, and would not earnestly further its interests. And this is a sufficient reply to all cavillers; for the law of self-preservation overrides all ordinary principles, rights, and claims.

Every loyal New-Englander will appreciate and respect this exigency in our infant colonial history, for it has a close parallel in the present condition of our country. A gigantic red-armed Rebellion has taken the government by the throat, and is aiming its deadly thrusts at the nation's life. The government feels and proclaims in the fearful crisis, that it must intermit some of the personal rights that are guaranteed by the law, and reckoned among the special and sacred safeguards of our liberties. And shall we protest against this invasion of our rights, and angrily denounce our rulers? Shall we suffer abstract principles to override the instant and overwhelming necessity? Shall we stand at bay, whimpering about constitutional limitations, when the whole national fabric is at stake? Shall we fear to violate the Constitution in the letter, that we may rescue it in the spirit? Shall the Constitution be pleaded against the patriotism that is willing to hazard something to save it from destruction? No!—a thousand times—no! If the national life have perished, what good of the Constitution, however sacredly it may have been preserved inviolate! “**FIRST, AT ALL HAZARDS, PRESERVE THE NATION'S LIFE!**” is the sentiment that thrills through every patriotic heart and tingles to the fingers' ends. Preserve the nation's life, and that accomplished, trust to a grateful and jealous loyalty to enthrone the Constitution, free from blemish or vital mutilation, in its blessed supremacy once more!

So precisely was it that the Puritans, when they organized their colonial government, felt compelled, for salva-

tion's sake, to restrict the suffrage to the members of their own communion. What tongue, save that of malice, leaguing with treason, will gainsay them?

II. We come now to the second charge against them, which is, that "they were false to religious liberty; for that they banished Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and many others, and mutilated and hung several Quakers. In fact, persecuted to the bitter end all who did not agree with themselves."

Now we shall not be guilty of any such absurdity as to assume that there was not extant among the Puritans a vast deal of what would be stigmatized now-a-days as Satanic bigotry. No doubt, the *animus* of a very considerable party who clamored against Roger Williams and the rest, was stimulated chiefly by religious prejudice. So much is matter of history. We could easily accumulate extracts from writings of both ministers and civilians, in those excited periods, which would cause the reader to blush for the malevolence that could so fiercely ventilate itself under the name of principle. And whoever wishes to kindle a flame of indignation or excite a laugh, has only to array a series of excerpts from the controversial literature of our colonial infancy at large, set off as it is by the grotesque style of the time, and the rigorous and often puerile notions that characterized the religious-minded in that age in respect to the duties and rights of practical life, and then superadd scraps of narrative about the "bitter persecutions" that were carried on, and, with multitudes of the unthinking, he will abundantly accomplish his purpose.\* But the true student of history scorns such partial, unphilosophical methods and un-

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\* We cannot but accuse Colonel Higginson, in his very piquant and readable article in the Atlantic for September (The Puritan Minister), of having done exceeding injustice to the Fathers, for the sake of exciting a laugh at their expense. His sketch is a striking specimen of the ease with which the mere externals and accidents of life and character may be made to usurp the place in attention and interest which is due to solid principles alone. True, Colonel

authorized judgments. He will take into view all the elements that combine to produce the sequence of cause and effect; and will never suffer minor influences to preponderate in impression over major ones, however bold and pretentious they may be. What, then, is the record of sober history in reference to the treatment of Roger Williams, Anne Hutchinson, and the Quakers, by the Puritan Fathers?

Let it be borne in mind, first of all, that religious toleration was very little believed in anywhere in that age. While a few noble souls boldly advocated it here and there, the great body of Christians of every name and race denounced it as an execrable heresy. It was regarded as a sacred and imperious duty to punish those who advocated false theories and practices in religion. And of course that was false with every man that did not harmonize with his personal creed. It would have been no reproach to the Puritans, therefore, beyond the condemnation they would have shared with the whole Christian world, if they had rigorously disciplined every dissenter from their communion; all the more because their civil polity was so essentially theocratic, and religious heresy might have been treated with perfect consistency as a high civil crime. How rich in manhood, then, must we pronounce them to have been, if we find that, except when the assertion of anti-Puritanic convictions interfered with their political security and social order, they were practically tolerant of dissent; thus not only standing admirably forth in advance of their age, but disregarding the logical demands of their own darling religious views.

Such was the fact, as there is abundance of testimony to prove; and let every one note it well, who has been overawed by the clamor against them to make deductions from

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Higginson has made the allowances and offsets that truth and justice demand. But he has done it after a negative, subtonic fashion, evidently determined not materially to qualify the zest of his article, but to keep the laugh uppermost. This, we hold, is hardly the thing in a lineal descendant of the old stock, just at this time, when slander is so busy with the reputation of the Fathers.

their renown. For, in the first place, as to Williams, it was not the *odium theologicum*, intense and exacting as it was in many bosoms, and bursting out in ceaseless denunciations, that effected his banishment. True, some of his most offensive principles, viewed in the light of the present age, would be pronounced mere crotchets about ecclesiastical prescriptions and methods, while much of the language used to characterize his offences, even in the legal processes against him, seems to be drawn from the technics of theology. But we must bear in mind the Bible basis of the civil polity of the Fathers; we must remember that with them the phrases "religious heresy" and "political treason" were synonymous and interchangeable; and then, disregarding the vindictive clamor of some of the ministers, and honestly sifting out the facts, we shall appreciate the real basis of action.

In the first place, let the reader take notice that Roger Williams arrived in Boston in February, 1631, and immediately began to broach his objectionable doctrines. Yet he was not exiled until January, 1636, an interval of five years. And meanwhile he was the pastor of a church, he ceaselessly preached and published his heresies, he multiplied around him a body of inflamed adherents. Now religious bigotry, when possessed of power securely to strike and silence its victim, does not usually forbear its vengeance for a period like that, especially if the offender be all the while actively disseminating his adverse counsels. In like manner, Anne Hutchinson, whose doctrines were radical and revolutionary in the extreme, went about venting them freely, and stirring up contention for two good years, before the arm of power was laid in suppression upon her.

Again, Williams was not condemned for heresy. Anne Hutchinson was not condemned for heresy. The Quakers were not condemned for heresy. No legal charge of the kind was brought against them. Nor were they tried in ecclesiastical courts by the ministers of religion. But they were tried before the civil magistrates. And the crimes

alleged against them were, that they were breakers of the laws and disturbers of the peace.

Was this in any sense a subterfuge? Was religious bigotry really the *animus* of the decision against them? We have already argued that such was the spirit of the age that bigotry required no subterfuge or excuse. The opinions and conduct of all these persons were such that they would have been disciplined in any part of Christendom for their vagaries; and the most of them had already run the gauntlet of repressive power in the mother land. Plainly there was no attempt at, because there was no need of, subterfuge.

And were they not in very truth breakers of the laws and disturbers of the peace? First, was not Roger Williams a disturber of the peace? What were the doctrines that he was making a loud-mouthed and industrious ado about all the time? We will cite a few of them, pointing out wherein they perilled the peace and existence of the colony.

First, he refused to commune with all who would not make proclamation of their repentance for having formerly partaken of the elements with communicants of the Church of England while in the old country,—the effect of which, if it had been tolerated by the colonists, would have been to intensify into a yet more truculent malignity the powers at home against whom it was aimed, and who were already ceaselessly plotting to circumvent them and bring them to ruin.

Secondly, he taught that the magistrates had no right to punish either idolatry, perjury, blasphemy, or Sabbath-breaking,—the effect of which, in that infant community, was to bring all law and government into contempt and neglect. Let it be observed, that three out of these four offences are penal on the statute-books of Massachusetts to-day.

Thirdly, he disputed the validity of the king's grant to the colonists, and insisted that they had no title to their lands,—the effect of which was to unsettle the tenure of all estates, and excite the king's vengeance by slurring his authority.

Once more, he declaimed against the magistracy as possessing no lawful power,— which was a stab at the very vitals of all civil government.

Now is not here a list of outrages against the well-being of that infant state, ample enough and objectionable enough to justify the exclusion of their author from its limits? When we consider how feeble it was, and how imperilled,— how it was at one and the same moment menaced by savage foes along its borders, and harassed by the envenomed machinations of enemies in the mother land, trembling sometimes on the very verge of destruction, preserved and guided only by the most consummate wisdom,— were the Fathers to overlook such stabs at its internal peace, such provocations to the hot revenges of external wrath? No: the law of self-preservation, already referred to, demanded the separation of such a firebrand from their midst.

“Yes,” we hear some one interpose; “but, after all, he committed no overt offence. He did but exercise his undoubted prerogative of freedom of speech.”

Ay, his prerogative, “freedom of speech”! A holy, a glorious prerogative is “freedom of speech”! But when in times that try men’s souls to very agony,—times when the whole fabric of government is reeling and tottering about their heads,—times when the present is all confusion and the future impenetrable gloom, and patriotism, already bleeding with wounds, is nerving itself for yet sterner sacrifices that may be demanded by the awful emergency,—in times like these, shall malecontents go about industriously traducing its motives, challenging its methods, sneering at its sacrifices, so as to divide public sentiment and paralyze energy, and claim to be protected and countenanced as being in the simple exercise of a consecrated right? Not so thought our Puritan Fathers. They said to Roger Williams: “This is a question with us of life and death. If we tolerate you, we expose ourselves to ruin. We wish you no harm. But we cannot—we must not—tamely abandon our

political experiment, for which we have already suffered so much. The land is wide. Take with you, if you please, congenial spirits, and carry out somewhere else the notions that are inconsistent here. *You must be silent, or go away!*" It was thus, moreover, that our Revolutionary Fathers said to the Tories: "All very well for you to love George the Third better than you love liberty. But the two loves can agree together no better than fire and water, at a time like this. The fire *shall* burn. You shall not extinguish it. *And you must be silent, or go away!*"

The children of these Fathers may well profit by their example !

Roger Williams was a man of high principle and of a lovely spirit. And it is a singular fact, that, while the enemies of the Puritans are virulently stigmatizing them for what is termed the "base persecution" he endured, he himself held in the highest honor and regard to the day of his death, and consulted habitually about his most important affairs, on terms of the closest intimacy, the very man (Governor Winthrop) who was at the head of the Puritan government at the time he was exiled. There has recently fallen into the hands of the honored representative of the Winthrop family a most precious historic treasure, in a large mass of letters and papers, once the property of Governor Winthrop, and not yet laid open to the public. Among them are no less than sixty letters from Roger Williams to the Governor, written after his settlement at Providence. We have been kindly permitted to transcribe one of them for the purposes of this article, by the gentleman who is arranging them for publication ; and its tenor tends very strikingly to vindicate the fame of the Governor and his Puritan compeers.

"MUCH HONORED SIR: The frequent experience of your loving care, ready and open toward me, in what your conscience hath permitted, as also of that excellent spirit of wisdom and prudence wherewith the Father of Lights hath

that intent, the intent that creates the opportunity for the  
writing and the art of writing - which means that it's the very  
idea of a different movement.

"Yes," we have some come to purpose, which, after all, the committed never do fling. The individual exercise has diminished perspective of span and depth!"

My this pre-rogative, "standard of speech?"! Ah! hobby, a ~~standard~~ prerogative is a standard of speech?!! But when such things that laymen should be very angry,—things when the whole fabric of government is reeling and tottering about their heads,—things when the present is all confusion and the future immeasurable gloom, and patriotism already bleeding with wounds, is nothing itself for yet sterner sacrifices than may be demanded by the awful emergency,—in times like these, shall mutinous go about indignantly denouncing its motives, challenging its methods, sneering at its sacrifices, so as to divide public sentiment and paralyze energy, and claim to be protected and countenanced as being in the simple exercise of a consecrated right? Not so thought our Puritan Fathers. They said to Roger Williams:—"This is a question with us of life and death. If we tolerate you, we expose ourselves to ruin. We wish you no harm. But we cannot—~~we must not~~—tamely abandon our

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imbued you, hath emboldened me to request a word of private advice, with the soonest convenience,—if it may be, by this messenger.

“The condition of myself, and those few families here planting with me, you know full well. We have no patent, nor doth the face of magistracy suit with our present condition. Hitherto, the masters of families have ordinarily met once a fortnight, and consulted about our common peace and planting, and mutual consent hath furnished all matters with speed and peace. Now of late some young men, single persons, of whom we had much need, being admitted to freedom of inhabitation, and promising to be subject to the orders made by consent of the householders, are discontented with their state, and seek the freedom of vote also and equality. Besides, our dangers in the midst of these dens of lions more especially call upon us to be compact in a civil way and power. I have therefore thought of propounding to my neighbors a double subscription, concerning which I shall humbly crave your help.”

Alas for Roger and his crotchets, that had occasioned so much trouble in the Massachusetts Colony! He experienced at last, most forcibly, the truth of the old adage, “Circumstances alter cases.” What was a perfect and lovable ideal, as antagonized against the Massachusetts government, proved a wretched instrumentality when put in force at Providence. And so we have here our exiled Roger pleading for the help of the officer who had aided to exile him, to construct that civil government for denouncing which, to the peril of the Massachusetts Colony, he had been thrust beyond its limits.

His deep-seated respect for Governor Winthrop, and the tone of his correspondence with him, prove that he did not lay his exile to heart as a wanton injury, but regarded it as having been dictated by a sense of duty. In fine, he was exiled, as well he knew,—although he made a great ado about it at first, attributing it to religious persecution,—not because of his religious opinions, but, in Dr. Palfrey’s felicitous phrase, because of his “busy disaffection.”

And how was it with the Quakers ? were not they disturbers of the peace ?

The Quakers with whom our fathers had to deal, are not to be judged of by the mild, unobtrusive conduct of the Quakers of the present day. Those original "Friends" felt that they had a special summons from Heaven to upset things generally everywhere ; and they did their best to accomplish their mission thoroughly. They committed excessive outrages against social decency and order in the mother country, and on arriving here, at once signalized themselves by grossly reviling the magistrates, and systematically and rudely interrupting public worship. They went about the streets denouncing the government and defying its power ; and two young women, really pure and modest, were so wrought upon by their fanaticism as to appear naked in one of the churches as a sign of the nakedness of the land. Well, what was to be done with such persons ? Clearly such indecent vagaries must be put a stop to. We should have made short work of them in our day ; we should have sent them to the House of Correction, or shut them up in a lunatic asylum. Our fathers bore with them longer than we should have done. They remonstrated and pleaded and threatened. Then they exiled them, and when they returned, noisy and unseemly as ever, they sent them off a second time. Finally, as a punishment and deterrent, the right ears of three were cut off ; and that infliction proving abortive, at length four were hanged.

These severities against such poor, misguided enthusiasts shock our sensibilities. The mutilation of the person by cutting off the ears strikes us as a savage and atrocious resort, while the forfeiture of life seems to be a punishment criminally exceeding the measure of the offence. Very well, let the enlightened and humane vent their indignation without stint at the brutal spirit of that age which could institute and tolerate such barbarisms. But let not a few sparse instances of their occurrence among the Puritan

Fathers, by which they simply showed that they were not so miraculously endowed as in all things to rise superior to their age, be cited to their special discredit. Such mutilations were among the commonest methods of penalty in Europe at that time ; they were inflicted by the hundreds every year; while capital punishment was meted out unrelentingly to scores of different offences. Human life was everywhere held very cheap. And the true, impartial question in relation to the Fathers in such a connection is, How does their administration of penal justice compare with that of the mother country and of the European continent at the same period ? Was it harsh or was it humane ? Did they revel in the severities that public opinion allowed and the penal codes everywhere authorized, or did they moderate their rigors ?

Justice will some time be done them. The base, prejudiced fashion of seizing upon their offensive transactions and holding them up to public abhorrence, unrelieved by the background of the universal habits and customs of their times, will finally recoil on their calumniators. Here, as to these very dealings with the Quakers, what were the comparative facts ? Why, while the ears of small offenders were cut off, one or both, and their noses slit, day by day, without a whisper of protest or compunction, all over Europe, this *one* instance of mutilation, now brought to bear with such malignity against the Puritans, was so offensive to their superior light and culture, that no instance of the kind ever occurred in New England again ! Influenced by corresponding sensibility, the law under which the four executions took place was passed by only one majority after a protracted and anxious debate, and was never afterwards enforced ; although hangings, headings, and burnings were as common as the day for similar offences across the Atlantic. Our noble fathers ! The very dirt thrown at them by carping traducers turns to sparkling gems, that, glistening in the sunlight of impartial history, reflect a halo of honor about their brows !

The third and final charge against them is, that "they were superstitious and bloodthirsty fanatics, because they put a score of persons to death for alleged participation in witchcraft."

We need not linger on this charge. Like others that have been considered, it derives its force solely from a wanton disregard of historic connections and modifications. One would infer from the style in which the fathers are set upon for the part they played in the witchcraft delusion, that only in New England did such a delusion ever prevail; that it was Puritan fanaticism run to seed; was the normal and inevitable ultimate of the inhuman monstrosities of that type of thought and character. And yet it was only the transplantation to the shores of America of an infatuation that was raging with terrific violence all over Europe, and had been thus raging for a hundred and fifty years. There perished in England alone, on accusation of witchcraft, during the hundred and fifty years after the beginning of the seventeenth century, no less than thirty thousand persons! In Scotland, from the Act of Queen Mary on the subject in 1653, to the accession of James, seventeen hundred were executed, an average of two hundred a year. In Germany, the number of victims averaged six hundred a year. In the city of Würzburg alone, in the two years between 1627 and 1629, a hundred and fifty-seven were burned to death in twenty burnings, one half of whom were mere children. The last execution of the kind in England occurred as late as 1716; the last in Germany, that of a young woman, so recently as 1749.

The strongest minds were overwhelmed and taken captive by the fearful infatuation. Sir Matthew Hale, on the English Bench, superintended trials for witchcraft as gravely as he did trials for theft and arson. Sir Thomas Browne, citing the Bible, denounced all who doubted the fact of witchcraft as atheists.

The Bible, the Church, the law, the public opinion of all Europe for centuries, and, what was still more impressive, the

circumstantial confessions of multitudes of the accused, certified to its reality. Is it a wonder, then, that the delusion should have crossed the ocean? Is not this rather the marvel,—that the colonists should have escaped its intrusion so long, that their settlements should have been making their checkered progress for more than sixty years before it should have created the least excitement among them? Is not such a protracted immunity the most striking evidence that there was no affinity in the Puritan mind for superstitious monstrosities,—that it was too virile and solid and high-toned for that?

It came at last. It disordered society, and produced incalculable misery. Twenty persons on account of it suffered a violent death. But its reign was short. It raged for two years and a half, and then disappeared from New England forever. The Puritan character, in that brief period, triumphed over its infatuations. And what are the results it wrought among our fathers, compared with the horrors enacted all over Europe through its influence for hundreds of years? While the colonists executed a score, their European contemporaries executed thousands. While the colonists regarded the mania with agonized anxiety, and prayed over it and deliberated over it, and put their few victims to death under a sense of awful religious responsibility and with a sinking of the heart, the authorities across the water launched their multitudes into eternity with as little feeling as they would crack a nut. While the delusion dominated among the colonists less than three years, it triumphed over the common sense of Europe nearly three centuries. Indeed, if there be one point more than any other as to which history, when rightly studied, exalts the Fathers, it is the slight hold that the appalling superstition acquired among them under the circumstances. Only thorough greatness of character could have held it so long at bay, and spurned it after so short a continuance.

We have thus fulfilled the design with which we started. We have gathered up within a small compass the testimony

and verdicts of history respecting the conduct of the Fathers in those regards as to which they have been especially maligned. And we commend the triumphant issue to every loyal New-Englander, who, through ignorance of the details of our colonial annals, has slunk away, in mute confusion, when they have been attacked in his presence, or been seduced into admissions to their discredit. They have been often injudiciously praised, but never over-praised. Admiration can scarcely exaggerate their merits. If they had no express ideals of civil and religious liberty, they had solid principles of character, that ripened out in the creation of noble institutions of freedom. If they were in some respects tempered adversely by the spirit of their age, in the main they rose so superior to its trammels that they towered above all contemporaries, and were the pioneers of truths and rights that buttress the choicest developments of the civilization of to-day. There were bigots and fanatics among them, whose noisy venom has sometimes misguided the conclusions of the historian ; but their controlling spirits were neither the one nor the other. But they were men whom detraction can safely assail only where the sterling royalty of their manhood is unknown, men whose fame will grow brighter and brighter while New England survives, that bold, conspicuous monument of their greatness and their deeds.

H. F. H.

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“ DUST and clay,  
Man’s ancient wear,  
Here you must stay,  
But I elsewhere !  
Souls sojourn here, but may not rest ;  
Who will ascend must be undrest.”

*Ascension Hymn.*

## CHRISTIAN FRUITFULNESS.

A SERMON FOR AUTUMN.

BY REV. JAMES O. MURRAY.

JOHN xv. 4 :—"Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

ONCE more we have reached the season of fruits,—of barns bursting with plenty, and presses filled with new wine. The blossoms of June hang out their banners again in the colors of fruit. The seed which fell from the hand of the sower into the opened soil, and which could not be quickened except it die, has risen from its seeming grave into wide and waving harvests,—a resurrection of wondrous power and beauty, touchingly and impressively typical of that coming and greater resurrection of the dead, when that is raised a spiritual body which was sown a natural body.

There is a disposition to be sad in the autumnal season. We think too much of Autumn as the season of decay. Bryant sings of autumn days as melancholy days, the saddest of the year. But this is not Autumn in its deepest and truest aspect. Autumn is preservation, not decay ; the ingathering of life, not the harbinger of death, the funeral of Summer. If it has the sere and yellow leaf, it has as well the garnered harvests. If the sun shines less upon the earth, the harvest-moon reigns in queenliest beauty in the heaven ; the stars have added brilliancy, and the aurora flashes along the northern skies.

A healthy Christian mind will seek and prize all the Christian lessons which nature either suggests or enforces. Philosophers have professed to find the "cross in nature as well as nature in the cross." The Christian soul needs not the aid of philosophy to interpret the voices of nature, but may go direct to their teachings. For God has most wisely and benignly adapted nature to the mental and moral constitution of all men. When Jesus so frequently used these

teachings in illustration or enforcement of his own, he spoke as one feeling their power and knowing their worth. The fifteenth chapter of John, from which the text is taken, is a most apt and forcible presentation of the deepest spiritual truth through an exquisite analogy of nature. The vine with its branches,—suggestive to all minds of grace and tenderness and beauty, fragrance and fruit,—image to an Oriental mind of joy and blessing,—this is employed to set forth Christ's relation to the believing soul, and the spiritual results flowing therefrom. Among these results, and prominently set among them, is Christian fruitfulness. We employ then the season of fruits, to speak of Christian fruitfulness as the true lesson of the day.

*First, concerning its nature.*

It scarcely seems possible that this should ever have been misunderstood, so clear and full are the teachings of Christ on this point. To miss of understanding it, would seem to be failure in discerning the real import of Christ's example. Yet mistakes have been made; mistakes are still made. They come of *partial* rather than of *false* conceptions of the Christian life; but half-truths are sometimes little distinguishable from gross errors.

Christian fruitfulness has been made to consist in an affluent emotional piety, in an inward life full of rapt devotions, where the soul seeks the isolation if not the walls of a cloister, and deems itself "dead to the world in a sense absolutely repudiated by the first principles of the Christian faith," — a piety of spiritual moods, climbing from pits of depression to altitudes of ecstasy,—a piety which, in its introversions and "obstinate self-questionings," embodies some powerful and beautiful, some strange and pathetic, some most genuine and some most morbid workings of the human soul. There is fruitfulness, but it is fruitfulness of emotions. It is pietism rather than piety. It lacks naturalness and substance. It takes the elements of a true Christian fruitfulness and evaporates them into clouds of fragrant incense.

Most of this has been found within the cells of a cloister. In this phase of it, it has been largely the conventional piety. Still, the mystics of all ages have been more or less its exponents and defenders. It speaks to us from the sermons of Tauler and breathes in the hymns of Madame Guyon. Its text-book is the "Imitation of Christ," of which a fair criticism has said, "It begins in self and terminates in self. Of feeding the hungry, of clothing the naked, of visiting the prisoner, even of preaching, there is total, profound silence."\*

Our times, however, are like to run into precisely the opposite error. Even our piety is made to feel injuriously the intensely "practical" tendency of the hour. Such presentations of Christian experience as a "life hid with Christ in God," as "being crucified with Christ," as "abiding in him," as "fellowship with his sufferings," as "bearing about in the body the dying of the Lord Jesus," are let alone, as beyond any realization by the Christian soul in its daily common life. They are shunned as mysticism, or neglected as Hills of Difficulty, not to be climbed by modern discipleship. We crowd the Sabbath with services, having them oftener than our "necessary food." Our phrase is, *working* Christians,—seldom meditative Christians. We educate the young disciple in his Christian life by filling up his time with work in the Lord's vineyard, and leave him no opportunity for the culture of a profoundly thoughtful inner life. We have pulled down the cloister, but we have wellnigh destroyed the idea of the Christian closet, where thought of God warms and rises into communion with God.

Christian fruitfulness protests against this divorce of these two factors in the one Christian life. It joins them together in one spiritual development, as that which God has united. They are fountain and stream, the sun and the sunbeam. Just as in the purple cluster of the vine we must, with any

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\* Milman's Latin Christianity, Vol. VIII. pp. 300, 301.

true discernment, see the product both of an inward and an outward life, ministered to not less by hidden roots than by rustling leaves, so in a true Christian fruitfulness we see joined the devotion of a holy mystic like Tauler, and the energy of a holy missionary like Martyn.

A true theory, however, of Christian fruitfulness looks first at Christian character, at the inward life of the Christian soul. Like fruit, this is slowly matured. There is first the blossoming,—the early and fragrant promise of ripened Christian character. Then the slow formation of fruit upon the stem,—the first attempts at Christian living and doing. Then the gradual swelling into form and fulness, with much of crudeness and unripeness still manifest to the observing world. Then the more rapid ripening of autumnal days, till it hangs in rich clusters, with the cool dew upon its purple and its rich aroma, like the incense of all ripened Christian character. This ripens by long processes. We do not stride into the kingdom of Heaven in the seven-league boots of any theories of Christian perfection. Christian character must have its early and its *latter* rain. It draws its formative ingredients from all quarters,—from the heaven above, in the influences of the Holy Spirit; from the earth beneath, in the struggles of the soul itself, in the discipline of Providence. It thrives by sunshine and by storm; and, when it is grown into some fair proportion and holy ripeness, even then men do not recognize this inward life of the soul as fruit so readily as they recognize some outward deed,—the endowment of some charitable institution, some laborious service in reforms, some demonstrative efforts in extending the Gospel.

Yet it *is* fruit, and, applying the test of fruit,—usefulness,—it may well be questioned whether the Church of Christ to-day needs so much the mere outward activities of Christian discipleship as a profounder culture of this inner life,—this life of Christ in the soul of man; because all healthy Christian activity will spring from this inward life, and the

true way to develop this activity is to develop this life of Christ within the soul.

Still, Christian character must work itself out in such activities, in order to realize the whole idea of Christian fruitfulness. It is only in spite of a violent repression of its native tendencies that there has been any true Christian life in cloisters. Every monastery is an open contradiction to the last prayer of Christ; for, whereas he prayed that his disciples might not be taken out of the world, this is exactly what monastic life struggles to do. Christian character, like fruit, is to be for the benefit of others. The grapes exist not for the vine-branches, but for the men and women and children who may pluck them. From within outward, into all sacred charities; into labors more abundant, and perils often, if need be; into self-denying efforts in our mission-schools; into warm-hearted zeal for sanitary and Christian commissions; into the moralities, greater and lesser, which the teaching of St. James ever forbids us to dismiss as *mere* morality; into habits of Christian speech, making Christ the ruler of our tongues as well as hearts and hands;—this is the true theory, the true realization of Christian fruit-bearing. For, like fruit, this shall give men knowledge of the quality of the inner life, the good tree bringing forth good fruit. This was the conception of a fruitful, holy living, which has had such fresh and forcible picturing in the first Psalm:—

“Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.

“But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.

“And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither; and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper.”

Let us, in the second place, turn to what the text—indeed, to what the whole chapter—presents as the condition and

principle of Christian fruitfulness, — *Union with Christ*. Symbolized how beautifully and aptly under the relation of the branch to the vine, taught expressly in words like these : “ Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away, and every branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth it, that it may bring forth more fruit. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine ; no more can ye, except ye abide in me. He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit. If a man abide not in me, he is cast forth as a branch, and is withered.” This law of Christian fruitfulness is set forth with the same emphasis that Christian fruit-bearing itself is insisted on. The two stand side by side, — the thing and its condition, the effect and the cause, mutually enforcing each other.

Having, then, so grand a result referred to a cause so specific, we must expect to find in this union with Christ elements of vast spiritual power. This indeed is consonant with the whole teaching of the New Testament. The Christian believer is most frequently represented as being “ in Christ ” : — “ I am crucified with Christ ; nevertheless, I live ; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.” “ I in them, and thou in me, that they may be made perfect in one.” These passages show us how close and how vital, how spiritual and organic, is this union of a Christian soul to its Lord.

Seeking, however, for some more analytic views of this divine fact, we must be careful not to resolve it into the simple power of Christ’s teaching in the soul. His divine words ought to live in a Christian memory of them ; not a mere recollection of their syllables, their nouns and pronouns, and adjectives and adverbs, but a memory of them as truth, to quicken our affections and instruct our consciences, and indoctrinate us into a true knowledge of God. They ought not to be simply a *rule* of life ; they ought to have some vivifying power over our souls, and Christ’s abiding with us must always include under its terms an indwelling power of his

truth. His words are living words; they are spirit and they are life. Still, Christ is more than a teacher sent from God, else had apostles never preached so prominently his death; and when he abides with us, he abides in the completeness of his great offices as Redeemer. Nor can we resolve this union with Christ into a simple following of him as an example. This, too, is a source of Divine life within us. No Christian soul can think of that life, as the Evangelists record it, with its assiduous ministries to the lost and the helpless, the poor and the friendless, the publican and the sinner, with all its divine meekness and patience, with its judgment-hall of Pilate,—midway between Gethsemane and Calvary,—and not be stimulated to holiness of heart and life. No historic studies, no philosophy of history, can ever disclose to us what has been done for human virtue simply by the power of Christ's example; and this both by restraint and by impulsion,—restraint from wrong, and impulse toward right. Yet Christ, in announcing himself "the Life," never resolved it into a mere model of virtuous conduct. This is life only in an outward sense. The term has a deeper meaning. We are glad to ascribe all might to the life of Jesus in this outward, regulative sense; still, when we read that "in him was life," of the vine and the branches, of his living in us, of being one with him, even as he is one with the Father, we must seek a profounder sense for the words "abiding in him" than a reception of his teachings or a following of his example.

We take his words, "I am the vine, ye are the branches," and believe in a union with Christ, organic, vital,—mystical, if you choose; for one life, and but one, pervades vine-stock and branches, from rootlet to leaflet. We take the Pauline figure of the body and its members: "Now ye are the body of Christ and members in particular"; and we believe in a union with Christ so full and entire, that it has, like the body and the members, the same vital forces playing through the system. Is it anything beyond the plain teach-

ing of Scripture that this life of Christ is imparted to the believing soul through its oneness with Christ, that oneness being the transforming work of the Spirit? It is supernatural indeed. But so is revelation supernatural; and there are in the Christian life more things in heaven and earth than are dreamt of in our philosophy. We have newness of life, if we be the true children of God. Whence does it come, if not through the indissoluble union between Christ and the Christian soul, wrought by the renewing Spirit? Our life is indeed hid with Christ in God; but it is hid there with Christ. His life becomes our life, through our faith in him. It is no mechanical infusion of spiritual forces, with which our wills have nothing to do; but it is a life in us joyfully accepted as such by the election of our free agency.

So, then, do we abide in Christ and he abides in us. The two are complement and supplement; each implies the other. We abide in him not simply as

“The fountain-light of all our day,  
The master-light of all our seeing.”

We abide in him not alone as that hallowed and beatific ideal of virtue which rose upon the world from the lowliness of a manger at Bethlehem. We abide in him simply, yet grandly, vitally because organically,—in mode which does perhaps transcend the analyses of our psychologies: but we abide in him, O how joyfully and safely and fruitfully!

This union with Christ—this abiding in him, and his abiding in us—is the law and condition of Christian fruitfulness, forasmuch as it connects us with the source of motives for Christian living and of strength for Christian living. All motives for godly living, drawn from the very nature of virtue, from the character of God, from the very make of the human soul, and from its imperishable interests,—all these have a reaffirmation in Christ Jesus. He is a living centre in which they all meet, and from which they proceed again clothed with fresh persuasiveness and authority.

Then there are found in him, as our Teacher and Example,—in his words and in his holy deeds,—new motives stirring men to the imitation of himself. “Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus,” exhorted an apostle, and then held up the ministry of Jesus as the source of motives to this high attainment.

All strength for godly living comes to us from this union with Christ. Whatever of holy love within us, whatever of holy deed without, all this is the life of Christ in the soul. Without him we can do nothing, is the negative statement of a truth which receives positive statement in the triumphant assurance of an apostle: “I can do all things through Christ strengthening me.” Just because he is the vine and we are the branches, for just this reason do we derive from Christ all our Christian strength. The relation is one of dependence. Christian humility is glad to recognize it; in this relation of dependence, a true Christian insight sees strength and safety. Herein is that saying true, “My grace is sufficient for thee, for my strength is made perfect in weakness,” and the rapturous assent of the apostle to this divine fact is reasonable and just: “Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.”

As this union contemplates an abiding of Christ in the soul, so does it contemplate an abiding of the soul in Christ. “Abide in me, and I in you.” The branch abides in the vine, as the vine lives and dwells in all the branches. The one is many, and the many one. We have need to dwell on this abiding of the believer in Christ, because it holds up to us the personal activity and responsibility of the Christian disciple, and because it stands in vital connection with Christian fruitfulness. Nothing but this abiding in Christ will secure to us a true Christian progress. It is the lament of many earnest souls, that their best purposes and endeavors are so fugacious. If they could only stereotype some Christian mood into which they have been exalted, as upon

some Mount of Transfiguration, then they were better fitted to go down into the world of noise and struggle, which lieth hard by. But the mood was but a mood ; it came and went. It was too fugitive to secure permanent results in Christ-like living. Any honest Christian consciousness will confess that its life is too, too much by fits and starts. It is the injurious result of "new measures" of a mere revivalism, that it resolves Christian living into a series of spasms, — convulsive efforts now, gloomy and enervated collapses then. To counteract all such tendencies, to secure a development in fruitfulness that should be uniform, Christ said, "*Abide in me.*" *Abide* in me as the branch *abideth* in the vine. "As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, no more can ye, except ye abide in me."

If you would verify the truth of this teaching, see for yourselves how exactly and fully Christ is the life of all Christian fruitfulness in every department of human activity. Our devotional literature, from its homilies to its hymns, is all aglow with the burning love of Christ. Our philanthropies are wise and successful, and numerous as they are Christian, and not founded on sentiment or ridden as hobbies. No man can explain the phenomena of Christianity save on the theory that Christ is a life in the soul of believers, through their union with him. But with this theory all is clear. We can tell what sent forth John Howard in his pilgrimage through the prisons and lazarettos of Europe ; what took Carey and Judson from their homes to dwell among heathen ; what sent Florence Nightingale to her Christian toils in Scutari ; what stirred in the heart of Bunyan as he wrote his Pilgrim's Progress ; what muse presided over the lyrics of Gerhard and Wesley ; what spirit dwelt with Wilberforce and Clarkson ; what it is which lights up so many Christian homes and hearts, — obscure to men, but known to God, as the stars themselves are known when he calleth them all by name.

Christian fruitfulness begotten of this union is, *in the third place*, the divine ideal of Christian discipleship.

"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit: *so* shall ye be my disciples." In these words Christ lifts high and clear before his disciples the true standard of their discipleship. In that earlier sentence from his lips, — "God *so* loved the world," — that monosyllable is the pivot on which a vast and blessed meaning turns. In this teaching as to the true ideal for Christian lives, the same monosyllable is again the pivot on which a solemnly practical meaning turns. *So* shall ye be my disciples. *So!* How? By bearing much fruit! By having its rich Christian clusters hanging upon our lives all along their history, — clusters of prayers and clusters of works; clusters of self-denials, clusters of Christian words and Christian thoughts and Christian feelings, so that the passer-by may say, "See how that vine-branch is loaded with its fruit!" This it is to answer Christ's ideal of Christian discipleship.

It should be so, because it is the law of such a relation — disciple and master — that the disciple should reflect the master. We expect the disciples of a master in philosophy to catch his spirit, and reflect him to the world. We expect the disciples of a master in painting to gain something of his touch and coloring and conceptions, and reproduce him to the eye. If it be so in earthly things, much more is it in heavenly things! The disciple of Christ should reflect Christ to men in this grand characteristic of Christian fruitfulness. For we must never lose sight of the earthly ministry of Jesus as the pattern and standard of Christian usefulness. On the side of the inner life, the devotional element in piety, see what is given us in the nights of prayer upon mountain-tops! On the side of his active ministry, take a single day in his life, the record of which has come down to us, and behold what holy energy and patience his works exhibit! Then take the suggestive words with which John's Gospel closes. And there are also many other things which Jesus

did, the which, if they should be written every one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that should be written. If such be the written history of Jesus, what must be that unwritten history; for he has an unwritten history, a gospel fuller it seems of his deeds than all that Evangelists record. How can we be his disciples if we be not at least *so* fruitful as faintly to suggest him to men, to certify the world that we have caught something of his life, and are honestly striving to reproduce it to the age in which we live?

To this also are we impelled by the force of distinct spiritual obligation. We must choose this standard of discipleship, in order to meet the obligations which press upon us as redeemed sinners. Even if it were possible for a man to make himself his own end, according to the beggarly philosophy of some French Encyclopedists, still, if we take into consideration the fact of an immortal life for man, the only way for him to live up to the scheme of *this* philosophy is to be full of Christian fruits in a Christian self-culture. But, according to a true philosophy, in obedience to the divine constitution of things, in a system of which the individual is part and God the head, no man can live unto himself. And he must be Christianly fruitful in order to meet these wide responsibilities which stretch out on every side of him,—in his household, in his community, in his nation, in the world for which Christ died, and to every creature in which the Gospel is to be preached. Here, then, is obligation to Christian fruitfulness, the force of which cannot be parried, the extent of which makes our hearts sink within us. Still we hear the voice saying, “*So shall ye be my disciples.*” And what we need most to remember is this, that it is for us not so much an ideal of Christian fruitfulness in some conspicuous position,—as standard-bearers of the Church, as heroes or heroines of Church history,—but an ideal of fruitfulness in inconspicuous positions, in humble spheres,—in nurseries and in shops, in Sabbath-school

classes, and in sick-rooms, by firesides and by the wayside, in that routine of familiar duty which makes the days seem all alike but for the nomenclature of the calendar or the phases of the weather, in that quiet, secret inner life on which God only looks, and which we confide only to the ever-sympathizing Jesus. Still here we perceive a great extent of obligation. It is atomic. It comes in grains, perhaps, here a little and there a little, precept upon precept, line upon line. But the greatest of mountains is at last a collection of atoms, and small duties in our obscure life make up a grand aggregate for Christian fidelity to answer to. Still we hear the voice, in its calm, clear, kind, but imperative tone, saying, "So shall ye be my disciples."

It is said that the *Te Deum* was written by St. Ambrose; and surely great was the reward of the discipleship which could bring forth such fruit in honor of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. A legend of the early Church tells us that St. Christopher, a Syrian soldier, on his conversion from heathenism, "begged that, since he never could become an adept at prayer, he might become the active Christian, and was well pleased to take his station by a river and spend his days in carrying over it upon his shoulders those who were too small or too feeble to ford it themselves." Each according to his several ability is the divine rule. St. Ambrose could not have been the Christian ferryman. St. Christopher could not have composed the *Te Deum*. Each fulfilled his course. Each had his reward. Each had caught glimpses of that glorious standard of Christian discipleship which is lifted on high for us, in the words, "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit." Each responded to the inspiring, authoritative, holy words: "So shall ye be my disciples. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you and ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain."

"I CAN PRAY, AND THAT'S A GLORIOUS THING."

DYING WORDS OF JOHN FOSTER.

THE dying Christian peaceful lay,  
No more his hands could do ;  
No more his feet the earthly paths  
Of duty could pursue.

No more the Gospel's joyful sound  
Could he to men proclaim,  
To warn them of the strength of sin,—  
Make known a Saviour's name.

His earnest mind, so strong and clear  
The realms of thought to scan,  
No more, with steadfast will, could toil  
To serve his fellow-man.

Where once was strength, was weakness now,—  
Weakness unknown before ;  
Yet with a spirit calm, resigned,  
The change he meekly bore.

For in that Master's steps he trod,  
Whom he so long had loved ;  
And faith in him sustained his soul,  
And all-sufficient proved.

" Still I can pray," he smiling said,  
" And that's a glorious thing."  
" O Grave, where is thy victory ?  
O Death, where is thy sting ? "

J. V.

## CONVERSATIONS OF THE SOUL WITH THE LORD.

FROM THE GERMAN OF FRANCIS THEREMIN, LATE COURT-PREACHER IN BERLIN,  
AND AUTHOR OF "THE AWAKING," "ELOQUENCE A VIRTUE," ETC., ETC.

## VIII.

## SELF-EXAMINATION IN VIEW OF DEATH.

WHENCE comes it, O Lord, that when I think of my death, which in all human probability cannot be far off, the thought does not fill me with joy, but rather with something like disquiet and anxiety?

Am I perhaps disturbed by the sins of my past life, and by the fear that on their account I shall have to endure fearful punishments among the hosts of the damned? I bless thee, Lord, that thou hast once filled me with this fear, and that thou thenceforward forevermore hast delivered me from it, by faith in thy merits. Yes, Lord, my faith stands firm, immovably firm; I know that I deserve pain and torment, but I know also that thou hast endured them for me: I do not fear the judgment.

What, then, do I fear? Ah, Lord! when servile fear vanishes, then comes in its place the anxiety of love. Thou who hast endured death for me, hast also laid upon me dear and sacred obligations, hast opened for me a sphere of action, hast appointed for me a position where I may labor for thy honor and for the salvation of my brethren. Soon, Lord, will my day's work come to an end; soon it will not be possible to add anything to it; and now I ask myself whether it can satisfy thee, whether thou wilt bear me witness that I have been faithful?

Faithful? How shall I measure my fidelity? By the great number of opportunities of activity which were offered to me, or by the feeble measure of my powers through which my activity was limited? If I look upon what I have accomplished in my life, it is indeed very little;

if I look upon my internal struggles, and upon the labor which my very weakness made unusually severe, I could believe that, though not much, it still was something. But am I also certain that I have performed everything which I was in a condition to perform? Am I also certain that, had I possessed a firmer courage, a more joyful confidence, I could not have broken through the bounds of my incapacity, and have accomplished that which seemed to me impossible? No, I have no such assurance, Lord; and because I do not know whether I have spent every moment of my life, since it was devoted to thee, according to thy will, I cannot but dread the moment when my life shall come to an end.

Dread? No, I will not dread it, I will drive out this fear by humility, and by a firm and joyful resolution. By humility; yes, Lord, thou knowest it indeed, and now I acknowledge it also, that I am least among all thy servants, the lowest in thy whole kingdom. There is not one among thy children to whom I prefer myself, not one to whom I do not willingly give place. In exaltation there is anxiety, in humility there is rest; in the act of humbling myself I feel that I am at peace. But mine shall be no false humility, which, by putting itself in a lower position, only seeks to escape greater demands. No, it shall be united with a firm and cheerful resolution to fill out every moment which thou shalt yet grant to me with more earnest activity. However few of these moments may yet remain, let me be found at least faithful in these few; and though much in my life may have displeased thee, grant that its end may find favor with thee!

What do I still fear when I think of death? Is it the loss of the earthly goods which thou bestowest upon me? It is not exactly that, but it is something like it. There are certain minds, Lord, as thou knowest,—I cannot tell whether to call them earthly-minded, tender, or effeminate,—who form attachments for some particular place or surroundings, or relations, where it may go well with them, even if

they have but a short time to stay there; and these cannot otherwise than painfully be torn from their attachments. Such a mind is my own; I too have found on earth such places, surroundings, and relations; and now when I think that I shall soon have to leave them, my weak heart is filled with sorrow.

Yet, however gladly my heart has received all pleasant impressions here below, I can bear witness, O Lord, that the impression of thy love has stamped itself still deeper in me. Though I love many things here, I do most certainly love thee also! I have often felt it, I shall feel it then most forcibly, when thou shalt call upon me to leave all else and to follow thee. I may still perhaps cast back a tearful glance upon the earth. Thou wilt pardon me this weakness! Then shall I follow thee, not from compulsion merely, but also with joy.

Is nothing more kept back then? have I told thee now everything that disturbs me? Yes, there is one thing more: the sufferings that often precede death. How shall I—alas! it goes hard with me to express it before thee, who hast borne the pain of the cross—how shall I, who so often have shown myself unmanly in slighter physical evils, be able to bear the sharper torments which perhaps then await me?

“Therefore, take no thought for the morrow, for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof.”

I thank thee that thou hast reminded me of this at the right time. I was just relapsing into the fault, which I have so often acknowledged for a fault, and so often resolved to shun, namely, to anticipate the coming trials, and to ask myself whether I dare trust that I have the power to withstand them. This is all very foolish, for perhaps the trial will never come; perhaps thou hast destined for me a painless death. It may be also that, when the trial comes, I shall find it quite different from what I have expected, so that I may be astonished myself how that which in the distance ap-

peared so formidable is so easy to bear. And thou, Lord, who ordainest the trial, dost thou not also bring it to an end for the very reason that we may be able to bear it? Thou dost this especially when one prays for it with quiet confidence, not when one torments himself long before by care and anxiety!

Where, now, is that unrest of mine which came at the thought of death? It has vanished. That which weighed like lead becomes light as a feather, as soon as one only confides it to thee; and should not one then rejoice to speak to thee? Thanks be to thee, O Lord, that thou hast once again so kindly consoled me!

## IX.

### IN ANGUISH OF HEART.

O LORD, to whom should I go but unto thee? Thou alone hast the words of eternal life! I entreat thee that thou wouldest now also speak such a word of light to me to heal my soul, for it is sadly ill at ease and fearful!

Wherefore? What has happened? Whence this disquiet and timidity which possess me? Is one of those who are dear to me threatened with loss of fortune or of life? Have I any great harm to apprehend for myself? Nothing of the kind, O Lord; it is a little, trifling circumstance, susceptible of many other favorable explanations, which has brought me into this mental depression. This cloud will vanish and be dispersed, as so many others which have filled me with similar alarm have vanished and been dispersed. But in the mean time, and until this happens, I will turn to thee, and will lament before thee, that my heart is still so easy a prey to every trembling emotion, that it rests with so little feeling of security in thy hands.

Ah, Lord, thou knowest that, among the many sorrows which we are subjected to on account of sin, anxiety is one of the greatest tortures of my heart. In earlier times, before

I knew thee, how it stirred and raged within me! And even now, since I have been awakened to believe in thee and to love thee, it has not pleased thee to deliver me from this torment,—except, Lord, when it has constantly driven me to seek thy face.

Ah! it will be quite different and far better with thee in thy heaven. From thine own mouth have I heard the sentence, *Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!* I have entered into it, and this joy does not, like earthly joy, bring with it a foreboding of change, but, on the contrary, a secure feeling of its unchangeableness. There I see, too, the destiny of my friends for time and eternity assured by thy grace. There no one whom I love is separated from me, so that I should have to ask, What is he doing? how does it succeed with him? what shall I soon learn of him? But I see them near me; I behold them, even if they are still walking upon earth, with a vision made clearer in this upper air; I see how they walk along by thy side; I see how thy gracious hand averts from them all injury, which calamity, nay, which even their own transgressions, might bring upon them.

But here in this poor and changeable earthly life, I am still far enough from this rest; and I confess that this is chiefly owing to sin. Ah! if I were only certain that I had never offended thee, if I were certain that I do not now also offend thee often, then an uninterrupted peace would dwell within me. But the consciousness of my earlier, my later, my constantly renewed transgressions,—this it is which destroys my peace.

I am not without sin, but I am full of repentance. The peace which innocence cannot give me is given by the confession of my sins. Yes, Lord, there is a way, a certain way, through thy grace, to obtain rest: it is to lament our guilt before thy face. Thus do I, then, lament anew before thee everything which I have so often deplored. Thus I confess, then, I am unworthy thy protection; and now springs up in me the assured hope: Thou wilt protect me.

And now I commend my affairs to thee, as well as the temporal and spiritual concerns of those who are dear to me. I have at times desired of thee in prayer for them much that was unnecessary ; now I desire one thing only : Keep them in eternal life ! I know with certainty that thou always hearest this prayer, that thou wilt hear it now also ; and all else is comprehended in it.

Yes, Lord, I commend myself, my affections, and all that depends upon them, to thy faithful, thy loving, thy almighty hand. Now I have given up all to thee. It will come to pass as thou wilt. I can await it calmly, for it will be well. Amen !

## X.

### IN SPIRITUAL JOY.

THE lake is calm, and a gentle wind ruffles its surface, and from the blue heavens the beams of the sun shine down through its clear waters to their lowest depths.

Calm as this lake is my spirit, gentle as its waves are my feelings, and the sun of joy penetrates with its rays into the depths of my heart.

What has occurred to me, that joy has so suddenly and so effectually found entrance to my heart ? Nothing from without ; but so much the more beautiful is the joy, because it comes from thee alone, O Lord, and from thy gracious presence.

O that I could only tell thee how immeasurably rich and happy thou hast made me all at once in thee ! In this overflowing fulness of internal bliss all worldly wishes which I might at other times have cherished have disappeared ; yes, if I were obliged to choose, I would rather bear the contempt of the world than its applause ; for such applause is in opposition to thee, but in this contempt I could enjoy thee so much the more freely and securely.

Between the sun and the earth, which is enlightened and

glorified by it, a dark cloud often intervenes ; and then a black and portentous shadow courses over the meadows and streams, just now glimmering in the light. Will thy beams, O my Sun, in which my inmost being now glimmers and shines,—will they, too, perhaps be soon withdrawn from me by such a dark cloud, which shall veil my soul in its accustomed garb of sadness ?

“ How can the children of the bridechamber mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them ? But the time will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast.”

Yes, truly, how can they mourn ? Would they not offend him by it ? And does it not become them to spend the time of the Divine visit according to the intention of Him who so kindly comes to them ? Be of good cheer, then, my soul, for the hour of prayer ; avail thyself of this upward flight which the Lord grants thee, to remain always before his face.

O Word of God, open to me thy depths ! the everlasting Word stands by me and will unveil them to me.

Is there a sufferer to console ? Is there a poor man to care for ? Is there any severe and necessary work to finish ? Up instantly ! Now thou hast the will and the power ; tomorrow both may have disappeared !

Disappeared ! Alas ! what a word is that ! Thou disappeared, O Lord, and I again alone !

“ Does the sun, then, disappear when it is veiled by a cloud ? The brightness of my coming may fail ; but I can never fail thee.”

“ WHEN first thy Eyes unveil, give thy Soul leave  
To do the like ; our Bodies but forerun  
The Spirit’s duty. True hearts spread and heave  
Unto their God, as flowers do to the Sun.  
Give him thy first thoughts, then, so shalt thou keep  
Him company all day, and in him sleep.”

RANDOM READINGS.

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## THE CONVENTION AT SPRINGFIELD.

NEVER were three more perfect days than the thirteenth, fourteenth, and fifteenth of October. The air was mild, and the soft, voluptuous haze lying upon the autumnal woods mellowed the contrasts of green and gold into a dreamlike spiritual beauty. We were among the first to report ourselves on Tuesday evening at the vestry of the Unitarian Church; but very soon it was filled with a crowd, many of them ladies, gathered from North, South, East, and West, to be absorbed by the large hospitalities of Springfield. Not having sent in my name previously, according to the programme, I did not consider myself as having the least claim upon them, and, having got my return ticket, was about withdrawing to some overcrowded hotel, when a brother minister came along and asked me to share his room. Of course I accepted, and we were both ticketed to the same place. It was not to a Unitarian family, but to the house of the Methodist clergyman; for it was one of the delightful features of the occasion, that hospitality abolished the lines of sect in the larger communion of Christ. We soon found the house, the whole atmosphere of which was one of the most cheerful piety and the warmest Christian kindness.

Tuesday evening, Rev. E. E. Hale of Boston preached to a crowded house from Matt. xii. 32: "Whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whosoever speaketh against the Holy Ghost, it shall not be forgiven him." The imminence of God in the human soul, through which man ever and everywhere has access to God, and through which God lives and operates in him, was the theme handled by Mr. Hale, with an eloquence which held the perfect attention of the audience for about an hour. The doctrine of the Holy Spirit had come to be acknowledged by all the sects as the most vital truth of religion, and on this they are all agreed. Before this the doctrine of who Christ was sinks into unimportance. Christ himself regarded the latter as of no consequence, and kept his own person out of sight. "Deny me, reject me, crucify me, but reject not the Holy Spirit." The leading facts of Christ's ministry were rapidly reviewed, classified in two divisions,—

Christ appealing unsuccessfully to the Jews, and successfully to the Gentiles,—the world at large, when he inaugurated the true Christian democracy, based on the doctrine of God's immanence in the souls of all his children.

Mr. Hale's sermon was variously understood, as sermons are apt to be;—some thinking that he made the historical Christ of too little account; others, that he only seemed to do so in magnifying the one great truth, which was enough for one discourse. How the Holy Spirit comes to us; by what means a sense of it is awakened in the soul and fills it with comfort and peace; why it came in Pentecostal gales after Christ's advent, but not before; why its procession was only through him, who "sent" it or "shed it forth" after his ascension; what Christ's relation to the Church is now, and how he is the Vine and we the branches; why he claims that all men should "honor the Son, even as they honor the Father"; why "no one knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son shall reveal him," and "no man cometh to the Father" but by him,—are themes we should be glad to hear Mr. Hale treat in a second sermon, complementing the doctrine of his eloquent discourse of Tuesday evening.

The theme introduced was happily chosen, and the devotions of the prayer-meeting, Wednesday morning, were toned and determined by it. These occupied the hour from eight o'clock till nine, when the Convention was organized by the choice of Dr. G. W. Hosmer of Buffalo for President, with Vice-Presidents and Secretaries. An essay was read by Charles E. Norton, Esq., of Cambridge. It was a neat, clear, and forcible treatment of the connection between Liberal Christianity and American politics. It was followed by the most earnest, rousing, and practical discussion that we ever heard on a like occasion. Dr. Osgood of New York led off in one of the best speeches he ever made, it being a trumpet-call upon the denomination to organize as a working power and a Church militant, and muster to battle against the evils of the day. Let them bring the intellect, the wealth, and the culture which they have, and organize for this end, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against them. Rev. Messrs. Clarke, Heywood, Staples, Scandlin, Moore, Hosmer of Deerfield, Ames, and Hall of Providence, followed the appeal with eloquent words, and with fact, anecdote, and narrative, which thrilled the audience, sometimes to bursts of sympathy and responses of

"Amen." Mr. Heywood was fresh from Chattanooga, and touched the audience deeply as he told facts illustrating the devoted patriotism and heroic self-sacrifice of the soldiers of the army. Mr. Scandlin, being called upon, related his experience in Rebeldom during his recent captivity. It was direct testimony to the unparalleled meanness and cruelty of the chivalry in their treatment of prisoners.

Dr. Stebbins appealed to the audience to help send back Mr. Scandlin to the army, telling them of his good work among the soldiers, bearing the wounded in his arms, soothing the sick, bending over the dying, and receiving their last messages of love. Said a parent whose son was in the army, "I feel at peace about him, for Scandlin is there." The collection was taken, and about \$450 was reported, among which was a one-hundred-dollar bill.

Dr. Hill of Worcester offered resolutions tendering to the President of the United States the co-operation and sympathy of the Convention. They were seconded by Dr. Farley, and unanimously adopted.

Wednesday evening the house was again crowded, and a discourse preached by Rev. O. B. Frothingham, on Infidelity, from 1 Tim. v. 8.

Thursday morning, after the prayer-meeting, which we missed, Rev. J. F. Clarke read his essay on Optimism. We presume it will be published. It ought to be. It was indescribably pungent, and cut like a Toledo blade through the sophistries of the "development" philosophy, which makes evil undeveloped good, scoundrels saints in disguise, murderers and harlots on the way to heaven, and falling up into it by "specific levity." God and evil, light and darkness, heaven and hell, God and the Devil, were set over against each other, the latter to be resisted and killed, and not developed into good. We did not hear the debate which followed, and with which the Convention closed. It will probably be regarded as more successful, more happy in its combined influence, and more quickening to high and generous aims, than any previous ones. So it was to us. Not all that was said was alike edifying, and among so many persons, with wide range of opinion, and various habits of theologizing, and the widest freedom of speech and thought, some things would be said, and were said, that many, and probably the majority, would utterly dissent from. But the main drift of the Convention was to ends highly practical and spiritual, warming the heart with zeal and devotion to the cause of God and man.

The City Hall is an immense building, and its capacities aptly symbolized the hospitalities of Springfield. At the collation held there on Wednesday evening, after the service in the church, there was the cordial greeting of old friends, and the flowing together of sympathies among friends who had only met in spirit before, storing up pleasant memories for a long time to come.

We must not omit the scenery of the Connecticut, amid which Springfield is set like a gem in a robe of brilliant colors. The Methodist clergyman who had received us so cordially into his house kindly gave his time to us Wednesday afternoon. The Arsenal buildings crown the height just in rear of the city, and from the summit of one of them the panorama of hills and cultured vales, divided by the Connecticut River, spreads far around into a gorgeous picture, now mellowed with all the blending tints of autumnal scenery. Thither we went, looking in, as we ascended the winding stairway, upon the long ranges of "Springfield rifles," piled up in organ-fashion, calling to mind those lines of Longfellow, so fearfully prophetic:

"O what a sound will rise, how sad and dreary,  
When the death-angel touches those swift keys !  
What loud lament and dismal miserere  
Will mingle with their awful symphonies !"

From the look-out on the roof of the Arsenal, Hampden County spreads out to you its woods and farms, sloping down to the Connecticut valley. What a splendid picture it would make, lit up by the setting sun, touching with flame the long winding river and peaceful lakes, and touching the yellow leaves of the forests with "mocky gold"! The sun was nearing the horizon, and we wanted prodigiously to stay and see it go down and touch off the grand illumination in honor of the victories in Ohio and Pennsylvania over Copperhead treason, news of which was coming gloriously in. But we could not, and left for a stroll through the Springfield Cemetery, which ever speaks for the beautiful taste of Peabody, who sleeps — all that was mortal of him — in its lovely bosom, where a monument, reared not long since by grateful friends, commemorates his genius and virtues.

Such were the three days of the Autumnal Convention, which those who attended will be sure to recur to often, as a bright spot in the journey of life.

## DR. CHANNING AND WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON.

THE following incident was recalled by Rev. J. F. Clarke, in his stirring speech to the Convention, Wednesday morning. In the darker days of the Antislavery reform, the Governor of Massachusetts, in his Message to the Legislature, had recommended a gag-law to silence the Abolitionists. This part of the Message was referred to a select committee, of which Mr. George Lunt was chairman. Dr. Follen and Mr. Garrison appeared before the committee, to show why the gag-law should not be passed. It was a cold, wintry day, as we remember, when the spectators were surprised to see the door open and Dr. Channing appear, with his pale, thoughtful face, walk down the aisle, pass Mr. Lunt, and take William Lloyd Garrison cordially by the hand, thus giving his sympathy publicly to the hated cause of the Abolitionists. Miss Chapman, who was in the gallery, turned and said to the lady who sat near her, "Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other." The world moves. It passed through several degrees between the time of the Governor's Message aforesaid and the first of last January, when a stroke of Abraham Lincoln's pen emancipated *de jure* three millions of slaves.      s.

## NOBLE SENTIMENTS OF REV. JOHN CLOWES.

THE following are some of the "extracts from Clowes" which Rev. Mr. Barrett was anxious to have printed in the New Jerusalem Messenger, but thinks he shall die without the sight. Clowes was a minister of the English Church, and a full believer in Swedenborg's philosophy and theology. He translated into English the works of the Swedish seer. He was a learned divine, and a man of singular purity of character, reminding one of the saintly Oberlin. Mr. Barrett, in the work noticed on another page, gives some exceedingly interesting items in the life of this good man. The beautiful spirit breathed in the extracts he illustrated in his long and useful life.

"Nothing can be plainer than that the New Jerusalem Dispensation is to be universal, and to extend unto all people, nations, and languages on the face of the earth, to be a blessing unto such as are meet to receive a blessing. Sects and sectarians, as such, can find no place in this General Assembly of the ransomed of the Lord. All

the little distinctions of modes, forms, and particular expressions of devotion and worship, will be swallowed up and lost in the unlimited effusions of heavenly love, charity, and benevolence with which the hearts of every member of this glorious New Church and Body of Jesus Christ will overflow one toward another. Men will no longer judge one another as to the mere externals of Church communion, be they perfect or be they imperfect; for they will be taught, that whosoever acknowledges the Incarnate Jehovah in heart and life, departing from all evil and doing what is right and good according to the Commandments, he is a member of the New Jerusalem, a living stone in the Lord's New Temple, and a part of that great family in heaven and earth whose common Father and Head is Jesus Christ. Every one, therefore, will call his neighbor *brother* in whom he observes this spirit of pure charity; and he will ask no questions concerning the form of words which compose his creed, but will be satisfied with observing in him the purity and power of a heavenly life."

"I could here point out some other dangers to be apprehended by the New Church from a sudden separation from external communion with other professing Christians, such as particularly the danger of falling into a sectarian spirit, and thereby despising or thinking lightly of all others, who are not worshipping God according to certain forms expressed in a peculiar language."

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ST. LOUIS, Mo., October 19, 1863.

MY DEAR S——:

I am so far away from you and from the "Monthly," that I can do nothing for our interesting charge save the writing of a letter. Of my journey to this city I shall set down but little: a part of the way is, I know, familiar to you, and railroad travelling avails little beyond shooting the pilgrim from point to point. Nevertheless, I did very much enjoy my ride through Michigan, most of it in the sunlight of a genial autumn day, and I was so fortunate as to see a perfectly cloudless dawn and sunrise out upon the prairie in Illinois. I had made my escape from a sleeping-car, with its still somnolent and sonorous occupants, out upon the platform, spite of the warning against the danger of riding outside, and presently found abundant space in one of the rear cars intended for the multitude. It was a refreshing change; there was abundant room, and there were unob-

structed windows. The ground was covered with hoar-frost; the roofs of the "feeding shanties" that occasionally met the eye as we rushed along were white and glistening, whilst not a stick or stone obstructed the view. Presently, through the belt of gold that encircled the vast plateau, rolled up the great globe of fire, not yet intolerable to the eye, and again, as before Hebrew vision, "the bridegroom went forth from his chamber, rejoicing as a strong man to run a race,"—a sight that never grows old. I was thankful that the sleeping-car would put me upon dreaming of being in a house in Boston, going through with a fearful earthquake that shook the dwelling to its foundations, and so made sleep impossible, else I might have missed my "sunrise upon the prairie," and have had no companion picture for my "sunrise at sea."

Presently I was brought from nature — shall, I say down or up to man? A large detachment of soldiers, returning from sick-leave to Vicksburg, rushed into the cars. I sat down by the side of one of them, who by and by gave me his name as "Job Hedger," certainly English in sound. I had quite a satisfactory talk with him about his experiences at Vicksburg, and his wife and small twins, of whom he was evidently very fond; examined her photograph, of which he was very choice, and had taken the utmost care through all his changes and chances, and found that he had been in Boston during his *Wanderjahre*. I was startled, however, by a most amazing outburst of what I had heard of, but never seen before,— the hatred of some of the Illinois people for the negro. One of that unhappy race caught his eye as we were passing a station, and he blazed up like a fiend at the sight, calling the attention of his comrades to him with tremendous oaths, assuring me, in response to my expression of astonishment, that he would like to tear the heart out of every one of the black rascals. I tried to quiet him down somewhat; and when I had succeeded, thinking it well to begin at the root of the matter, gave him some of friend Ware's tracts, which he received with great willingness, and set about reading with much interest. He took what I had in my pocket for distribution, and said there would be no difficulty in finding readers. I hope that the spirit of hatred and bitterness may ere-long be driven from his breast.

But I did not mean to keep you so long on the way, for here I am in St. Louis, in the midst of the excitements of a Border State, though, on account of the profound reticence of the Southern sympathizers,

unable to get at Southern opinion and feeling. Indeed, the struggle here is between those who ought to be friends, and seems to me most unnecessary. It is charged by the immediate emancipationists, that any delay in emancipation, even for the few years proposed by the Emancipation Ordinance, must be fatal to the Union cause in Missouri. That was all which was not personal in a speech which I heard from Senator Lane, better known as "Jim Lane," delivered on the 12th of this month (October) in the Turners' Hall of this city. He failed, however, to bring forward any proof of his assertion. I cannot understand why the emancipationists may not go to work in good faith under this ordinance, and prepare the way for the year 1870, which is to see Missouri a Free State. Moreover, it is altogether likely that long before this time the desired end will have been reached. There can be no question amongst fair-minded persons, who are not more zealous for party than for country and the truth, that slavery is practically at an end in this State; and when it is remembered that only the energetic efforts of a very few men saved the Commonwealth at first from falling into the Confederacy,—that at the beginning of the war this was what was most likely, indeed, almost sure to have happened,—that some of the most reliable Union men of this year were then strongly, yes, bitterly pro-slavery,—one ought to have a little patience, and a great deal of hopefulness. I should think, judging from the admissions of moderate men and friends of Governor Gamble, that there had been a great want of energy and healthful stringency in dealing with traitors and sympathizers; but there would seem to be no reason whatever for inaugurating revolution, or anything like revolution, in order to secure emancipation in a day. If the State should be ready to vote this great measure at once, it would unquestionably be an immense gain. It is far better for master and slave to emancipate immediately. Slave property can have but little value any more. The nearer one comes to the institution, the more manifest are its great evils and wrongs. I have seen the white refugees and the black contrabands, and of the two the whites were far more degraded. It is a fact, that, of the fugitives from the South who have come to St. Louis, not a woman has yet been found who could read and write, not one who did not smoke and chew, scarcely one who did not swear. They are a most ignorant and degraded set, wholly unskilled in domestic labor, poor cumberers of the ground. On the other hand, I have talked

with a colored man far along in life's journey, who, as he lay upon the bed waiting for the return of health, was spelling out his Bible, anxious, he said, to read pretty well and to figure a little, if it "pleased the Lord that he should get round again." In answer to my inquiry about his master, he said "that he was a mighty rugged one." "You would have stayed with him if he had been kind?" "Why, no, I likes to own myself and my work; that's the way with the rest of folks." The teacher of the contrabands at Benton Barracks, who, in addition to all her work in the daytime, has a class of adults in the evening, told me of an old man of seventy-two who was bent upon learning to read, and came regularly every evening. You should have seen the fine manners, pleasant smile, and graceful acknowledgment, with which one of the boys met the Rev. Dr. Eliot. "Are you the man who sent us the slates and books? We are very much obliged to you." There are black faces and forms which I do not love to look upon; I do wonder that the Lord, whose resources are infinite, creates such; but there were many of these poor people who were far more attractive every way than the same grade of whites, and I understood what I have read in Mrs. Putnam's book about the differences of nation and race amongst the blacks.

I have alluded to Benton Barracks, and I ought to say that the hospitals there seemed to me to be in the most admirable condition, and to be in every way fitted for their blessed purpose. The wards are well ventilated, the beds clean, the water abundant, the food comfortable, and the surrounding grounds all that could be desired for convalescents. Perhaps it is largely owing to these great advantages that the patients are very rapidly recovering, so that one sees rows of empty beds, and scarcely a very sick man amongst the occupants of the wards. The base of Western sanitary operations henceforth will be Nashville, following the tide of battle as it sweeps southward, and, in spite of temporary reflux, keeps the places which it gains. It is a great change from the time when the wounded were brought under any shelter that could be extemporized, laid upon the floors, nursed as they might be, and, alas! many of them carried out dead every day, almost every hour. And so many other things have changed too! I saw black men keeping guard the other day at the Provost Marshal's office, and no one said aught against it; and black troops have taken part in the patrolling, which is still deemed necessary for protection against emissaries of the Rebels. There is an

advertisement in one of the newspapers, nevertheless, of a sale of a woman and her child, on account of an estate, to take place on the 24th instant. I shall certainly be present. It will be an historic incident.

It is strange to be told, as one continually is, of Secessionist churches and pastors,—of one minister even, who had been convicted of disloyalty, and would have been sent South, had the authorities manifested proper energy; but I don't find that disloyalty is preached; I think this would not be tolerated. Within a stone's throw of the spot where I am writing, there is a house of worship which belongs to a congregation of Secessionists, and two or three others have been pointed out to me. It is worthy of record, that the Union congregations have suffered less than any from the pecuniary embarrassments of the times, and are not burdened with debts like those whose sympathies are with the South. Dr. Eliot's congregation shows the effect of the times somewhat, but not on the books of the treasurer, whilst the labors and charities of the pastor and of the people are historic. His church is a working church, and has connected with it a flourishing mission to the poor of the city, under charge of the pastor's son, who seems to be admirably fitted to carry on a work so excellent.

Washington University witnesses in another department of life for the high mission of the Christian scholar, and is doing a vast deal to shape the thought and to direct the vast energies of this Western world. There is a leaven at work in this city of St. Louis which will surely produce great and blessed results. The strong hand of the General Government can and must and will, sooner or later, put down the factions of every name, and make the State of Missouri, what it is not now, a safe dwelling-place for every order-loving citizen; the strong current of civilization must very soon indeed make this portion of our great country free; the resources from which industry is to derive immense wealth can hardly be over-estimated; but beneath and behind and within all these outward things there are redeeming moral and spiritual forces which will surely make this a noble commonwealth. The school and the college have got into the land, and they will in good time possess it. Teachers and preachers of the right stamp are shaping the thoughts of young and old. The time when the State wavered between freedom and slavery will be remembered only as a night of painful dreams. It will come to be incredible that men should have hesitated between the curse and the blessing. I do not mean that a year will bring forth all

this. It is impossible to say what mischief slavery may not yet work. Everywhere she has her servants, and they plot in the dark, now burning the steamer at the Levee, now putting shell into the coal-heap, that a multitude of defenceless men, women, and children may be hurled into the air when the fuel is replenished under the boiler; but these days shall be shortened, and Missouri shall be worthy of her proud position as the first of the Border States to range herself in the ranks of the free, and to sweep into the line of the grand march of Christian civilization.

Yours most truly,

E.

### NOTICES OF BOOKS.

*Catholicity of the New Church, and Uncatholicity of New Church-men.* By B. F. BARRETT. New York: Mason and Brothers.—Swedenborgians have their High Church and Broad Church, the former represented in the "General Convention" and its organs, "The New Jerusalem Magazine" and "The New Jerusalem Messenger." Mr. Barrett is an advocate of the Broad Church, and tries to convert his brethren to his liberal ways of thinking. The first portion of his volume is devoted to an exposition of Swedenborg's views, which appear broad and inclusive, embracing all the good of all religions as the people of the Lord and the true Church Universal. This part of the volume is delightful; and Mr. Barrett, in the exercise of his warm charity and broad sympathies, is here at home. The second part is sad and painful. He exposes things in the action of the Swedenborgian ecclesiasticism more wanting in common fairness than we often find even in sectarian controversy. Not all, however, that he complains of, appears to us as it does from his point of view. An editor might decline to publish extracts from Clowes, for reasons of his own, without any violation of editorial courtesy. But no editor who practises the golden rule will copy scurrilous criticism, and then refuse his columns to have the wrong righted, after it has been acknowledged as such by the original publisher. Things of this sort Mr. Barrett details in his "Part Second." He also quotes largely from documents to show the papistical tendencies of the English and American New Church; and the disclosure, to those not already acquainted with the facts, will be somewhat surprising.

The spirit of the book is unexceptionable. Even the controversial portion, though frank, is kind and gentle, and must have been written under a painful sense of duty. Mr. Barrett sees the New Jerusalem descending among all the good of all the Christian denominations, making their lines of separation to be more dim and wavy, and the Christ in the midst of them more unclouded in his glory.

He shows conclusively that Swedenborg never intended to found a sect, and that the attempt to appropriate him for such an end has ministered to strife, bitterness, and uncharitableness, and not to magnanimity, candor, and brotherly kindness.

The following extracts will show the contrast which Mr. Barrett is desirous of making, and illustrate the scope of his book. He quotes in a note a pamphlet on Baptism, by Thomas Wilks, whose object is to show that baptism in the "Consummated" Church is not valid, and only New-Church baptism is, meaning by Consummated Church all the churches except Swedenborgian. Mr. Wilks says:—

"Now, since, according to the laws of the spiritual world, there can exist no communication between this church and heaven, and since *all* its worship is totally rejected as spiritual abomination in the sight of the Lord, it is evident that its perverted baptism — which, being included in *all* its worship, is necessarily rejected — does not insert its baptized among Christian spirits in that heaven from which it is, as to its internal state, so far separated and removed as to render communication with it impossible." 'The societies and congregations in the spiritual world into which its baptism inserts are composed of such spirits only as are necessarily excluded from heaven.' Again, in the same paragraph, we are told that its baptism '*can insert into no other societies than those of the dragon and false prophet.*' In other words, and without the shadow of perversity," [this is Mr. Barrett's comment,] "baptism, when administered by other than Swedenborgian hands, inserts the subjects thereof among the devils of hell!" — pp. 17, 18.

This pamphlet, Mr. Barrett says, is advertised and approved, and the author stands high with his denomination. We should rejoice to believe that the views were becoming obsolete, and supposed so till we read the disclosures of this book. Mr. Barrett cites much else to the same purpose. He contrasts these views with Swedenborg's. The following is one of his extracts, which we insert for its own beautiful spirit:—

"Let this truth be received as a principle, — that love to the Lord and charity toward our neighbor are the essentials on which hangs all the law, and concerning which all the prophets speak, and thus that they are the essentials of all doctrine and of all worship. In this case, the mind would be enlightened by innumerable things contained in the Word, which otherwise lie concealed in the obscurity of a false principle; yea, in this case all heresies would vanish and be done away, and *out of many there would be found one Church, houssoever differing as to doctrinals and rituals,* either flowing from the above essentials or leading thereto. .... Supposing this to be the case, all would be governed as one man by the Lord; for all would be as members and organs of one body, which, although they are not of similar form nor of similar functions, nevertheless have relation to one heart, on which they all depend both in general and in particular, be their respective forms ever so various. In this case, too, every one would say of another, *in whatsoever doctrine or in whatsoever external worship he was principled,* 'This is my brother: I see that he worships the Lord, and that he is a good man.' — A. C. 2385.

S.

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*Several Notices of Books, omitted in this No., will appear in the next.*